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IN THE CLAIMS

1-10 (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

- the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

- where the operation of replicating the contents is completed only in response to performance of each of the following actions:

- the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer;

- the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer, the user prompt including notification that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second computer;

- the IM application program running on the second computer detecting user selection of the user prompt.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first

and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

- the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

- where the replicating operations comprise:

- responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, the IM application program running on the first computer performing operations including uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer;

- responsive to the IM application program running on the first computer receiving user entry of a send command, the IM application program running on the first computer transferring said uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

- responsive to receiving the transferred contents and format, the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;

- the IM application program running on the second computer, responsive to user selection of the user prompt, copying the transferred contents and format to the clipboard of the operating system running at the second computer.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

where the replicating operations comprise:

responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, the IM program running on the first computer presenting an acknowledgement message in conjunction with the IM window of the first computer;

responsive to the IM application program running on the first computer receiving user entry of a send command, performing operations comprising:

the IM application program running on the first computer uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer, and transferring said uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer responsive to receiving user selection of the user prompt,

copying the transferred contents and format to the clipboard of operating system running at the second computer.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

- the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

- where the transmitting and replicating operations comprise:

- responsive to the IM application program running on the first computer receiving user entry of a send command, performing operations comprising:

- the IM application program running on the first computer sending notice of the paste to the IM application program running on the second computer;

- the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;

- responsive to receiving user selection of the user prompt, performing operations comprising:

- the IM application program running on the first computer uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer, and transferring said uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

- the IM application program running on the second computer copying the transferred contents and format to the

clipboard of the operating system running at the second computer.

15. (Previously Presented) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

- the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

- where the replicating operation comprises responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, the IM application program running on the first computer performing at least one of:

- uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer;

- uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer and transferring the uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

- sending notice of the paste to the IM application program running on the second computer.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, where:

- completion of the replicating operation is conditioned on the IM application program running on the second computer receiving user selection of the user prompt.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, the user prompt comprising a hyperlink.
18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16,
the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer having
been populated by a document fragment from a given source
application program;
the user prompt further including identification of the given source
application program.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16,
the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer having
been populated by differently formatted versions of a document
fragment from a source application program;
the replicating operation placing the differently formatted versions of the
document fragment into the clipboard of the operating system of the
second computer, reserving choice as between the versions to any
application programs running on the second computer receiving a
predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a
predetermined paste command of the operating system running at
the second computer.
20. (Currently Amended) A process of communications between first and
second computers having an open text messaging link, the computers running
respective text messaging application programs providing a text messaging
window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the
process comprising operations of:
replicating contents and format of a first computer's operating system
clipboard in an operating system clipboard of a second computer,
where the replicating operation is conducted responsive to

coordinated user instructions submitted via respective text messaging application programs of the first and second computers; ~~computers.~~

where the operation of replicating contents and format of the clipboard includes suspending display of the clipboard contents from the IM windows and displaying system messages instead.

21. (Currently Amended) Computer-readable storage media containing a first program for installing a second program, the second program when installed on multiple target computers performing operations for communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the operations comprising:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer; ~~computer.~~

where the operation of replicating the contents is completed only in response to performance of each of the following actions:

the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer, the user prompt including notification that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer
detecting user selection of the user prompt.

22. (Currently Amended) Computer-readable storage media containing a first program for installing a second program, the second program when installed on multiple target computers performing operations for communications between first and second computers having an open IM link, the computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the operations comprising:

replicating contents and format of a first computer's operating system clipboard in an operating system clipboard of a second computer, where the replicating operation is conducted responsive to coordinated user instructions submitted at each of the computers via interfaces provided by windows of respective IM application programs; programs.

where the operation of replicating contents and format of the clipboard
includes suspending display of the clipboard contents from the IM
windows and displaying system messages instead.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, further comprising: responsive to the first computer receiving the predetermined user input sequence, the first computer displaying a system message in lieu of displaying contents of the clipboard in the IM window of the first computer.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, where the operation of the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer is performed in lieu of any display in the IM window of the second computer of the clipboard provided by the operating system running at the first computer.

25. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

responsive to occurrence of at least a minimal set of actions in conjunction with the IM windows, the IM application programs automatically negotiating reproduction of contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

where the negotiating operations include suspending display of the clipboard contents from the IM windows and displaying system messages instead;

where the minimal set of actions includes:

the IM application program running on the first computer detecting invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste command of the operating system running at the first computer in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer, the user prompt including notification that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer detecting user selection of the user prompt.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an

IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

responsive to receiving user instructions entered in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer importing contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first ~~computer~~; computer, where the IM application program suspends display of the clipboard contents from the IM window and displaying one or more system messages instead;

responsive to receiving user instructions entered in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer transmitting the uploaded contents and format to the IM application program at the second computer;

responsive to receiving user instructions entered in conjunction with the IM window of the first computer, the IM application program at the second computer presenting a user prompt indicating that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second ~~computer~~; computer, the IM application program at the second computer suspending display of the clipboard contents from the IM window at the second computer;

responsive to the second computer detecting predetermined user selection in conjunction with the user prompt, importing the transmitted contents and format into a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer.

27. (Previously Presented) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, responsive to the first computer receiving the predetermined user input sequence, the first computer displaying a system message in lieu of displaying contents of the clipboard in the IM window of the first computer;

responsive to user entry in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer importing contents and format from a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer;

responsive to user entry in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer transmitting the uploaded contents and format to the IM application program at the second computer;

responsive to user entry in conjunction with the IM window of the first computer, the IM application program at the second computer, in lieu of displaying contents of the clipboard in the IM window of the second computer, displaying a user prompt indicating that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second computer, the user prompt including a hyperlink;

responsive to the second computer detecting user activation of the hyperlink, performing operations including importing the transmitted contents and format into a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer.

28. (New) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers having respective first and second users, the first and second computers running respective first and second IM application programs providing

respective first and second IM windows for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

- responsive to initial actions including at minimum the first user activating a command to paste contents of a first clipboard provided by an operating system at the first computer into the IM window of the first computer, the first IM program suspending display of first clipboard contents from the first IM window and instead presenting a system message acknowledging said actions;

- responsive to said initial actions or further actions by the first user entered in the first IM window, the second IM window presenting a prompt to the second user to accept the first clipboard contents into a second clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

- responsive to acceptance actions including, at minimum, the second IM program detecting the second user accepting the prompt, the second IM program causing operations to place a copy of the first clipboard contents into the second clipboard;

- where an operations of uploading the first clipboard contents into the first IM program is conducted in response to the initial actions, further actions, or acceptance actions;

- where an operation of transmitting the first clipboard contents to the second computer are conducted in response to further actions or the acceptance actions.

29. (New) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers having respective first and second users, the first and second computers running respective first and second IM application programs providing respective first and second IM windows for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising:

responsive to occurrence of prescribed user actions entered via user interfaces features provided by the IM windows, the IM application programs automatically negotiating reproduction of contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer, where the negotiating operation includes the IM application programs suspending display of the clipboard contents from the IM windows and displaying system messages instead.

30. (New) A method of exchanging data between first and second computers with respective first and second instant messaging (IM) programs installed thereon, where respective first and second IM windows are provided by the IM programs, where the first and second computers include first and second operating system clipboards, and the first and second computers are operated by first and second users, the method comprising:

- first user invoking a predetermined paste command to paste contents of the first clipboard into the first IM window, and the first IM program responding by suspending display of contents of the first clipboard and displaying a system message instead;

- in response to the paste command or a further command issued by the first user:

- the first IM program sending notice to the second IM program of a request to transfer contents of the first clipboard to the second computer;

- the second IM window presenting a prompt notifying the second user of the request;

- responsive to the first user invoking the paste command, or the further commands, or the second user accepting the prompt, the IM programs cooperatively transferring contents and format of the first clipboard from first computer to the second computer;